# Emergency Paid Leave

## On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The Act included provisions authorizing Emergency Paid Leave (EPL) for covered federal employees.

EPL is a separate leave entitlement established by section 4001 of the [American Rescue Plan Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319) and is available at the employee’s request to ease the impact of COVID-19 on federal employees. This leave is available when an employee is unable to work, including telework, due to the impacts of COVID-19 included in the law. Unlike other leave programs, EPL is set up as a $570 million fund administered by OPM.

Employees can request EPL during the period from March 11, 2021, through September 30, 2021, and are not required to first use any other available paid leave. EPL is paid at the same hourly rate as annual leave. Full-time employees who work 80-hours in a pay period may receive up to 600 hours of paid leave, subject to a pay cap of $2,800 gross salary per pay period. The maximum amount of leave is prorated for part-time employees and employees on uncommon tours of duty.

## Qualifying Circumstances/Reasons

EPL is available when an employee cannot work because the employee:

1. Is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID- 19.
2. Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 concerns.
3. Is caring for an individual subject to an order described above in reason (1) or self- quarantine as described in reason (2).
4. Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is actively seeking a medical diagnosis.
5. Is caring for employee’s child when required because, due to COVID-19 precautions, the child’s school or place of care has been closed, or the child is participating in virtual learning instruction, or the child’s care provider is unavailable.
6. Is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by OPM.
7. Is caring for a family member 1) who has a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older, and 2) is incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual is available to care for such family member if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.
8. Is obtaining immunization related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization (after using the two days of administrative leave allowed for recovery from an adverse reaction a COVID-19 vaccine).

## Facts about EPL

* Biweekly gross max pay for leave hours used under EPL is $2800. Hours will differ depending on employee’s hourly rate.
* The aggregated limit for EPL use is 600 hours (from March 11 to September 30, 2021, or until funding is exhausted).
* EPL can be used in 15-minute increments, similar to other leave programs.
* Documentation is required.
* [Use of EPL will affect your retirement annuity calculation](https://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/publications-forms/benefits-administration-letters/2021/21-102.pdf).
* Use of EPL will be documented in the electronic Official Personnel File (eOPF) and retirement record.
* If/When funding for EPL is exhausted, leave must be converted to another type.

## Requesting EPL

Employees seeking to request EPL must complete the following forms and submit them to their first-line supervisor. All requests for EPL will receive a decision of conditional approval, or decision that the request does not meet the requirements of EPL or requires additional information to be considered. Requests will not receive final approval until they are submitted to OPM, which is bi-weekly, and OPM confirms there is funding available for the requests. If there is no funding available, employees will be required to use another type of leave to cover the absence. Once a request has been received from an employee, supervisors are asked to reach out to your [Servicing HR (Employee and Labor Relations) Specialist](https://ibc.doi.gov/HRD/hrod-org-chart-and-contacts).

Documents required to be completed by Employees (provided to your supervisor):

* [COVID-10 Emergency Paid Leave Employee Notification and Supplemental Leave Request Form](https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/doi-covid-19-emergency-paid-leave-epl-employee-notification-and-supplemental-leave-request-form-508.pdf)
* [COVID-19 Emergency Paid Leave Employee Agreement](https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/doi-covid-19-emergency-paid-leave-employee-agreement-508.pdf)
* Required additional documentation outlined in the Employee Notification and Supplemental Leave Request Form

Document required to be completed by Supervisors (provided to Employee and HR (Employee and Labor Relations) Specialist along with all documents from the employee):

* [Supervisor Checklist](https://ibc.doi.gov/sites/default/files/HRD/files/Emergency-Paid-Leave-Supervisor-Checklist.pdf)

## Timecard Coding

Employees will also need to submit a request for the leave in Quicktime.

Until IBC’s personnel and payroll system, FPPS, is updated with the required new pay codes for such leave usage, IBC is adopting an interim solution to document the use of EPL. Employees conditionally approved for EPL should charge their time to **pay code 061 (Administrative Leave – Weather & Safety Leave Used),** along with the associated payroll remarks (Message to Payroll) listed in the chart below**.**

**For requests to be processed, the correct pay code and associated payroll remark must be entered.**

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| **Qualifying Circumstance Reason Code** | **Description** | **Payroll Remark (Message to Payroll)** |
| **1** | Is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 | EPL - 1, Occurrence # and dates used |
| **2** | Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19 | EPL - 2, Occurrence #  and dates used |
| **3** | Is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order or has been so advised | EPL- 3, Occurrence #  and dates used |
| **4** | Is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis | EPL - 4, Occurrence #  and dates used |
| **5** | Is caring for employee’s child when required because, due to COVID-19 precautions, the child’s school or place of care has been closed, or the child is participating in virtual learning instruction, or the child’s care provider is unavailable. | EPL- 5, Occurrence #  and dates used |
| **6** | Is experiencing any other substantially similar condition | EPL- 6, Occurrence #  and dates used |
| **7** | Is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 | EPL- 7, Occurrence #  and dates used |
| **8** | Is obtaining immunization related to COVID- 19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization | EPL- 8, Occurrence #  and dates used |

## Questions?

**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your** [Servicing HR (Employee and Labor Relations) Specialist](https://ibc.doi.gov/HRD/hrod-org-chart-and-contacts).

## Additional Resources

* [IBC Customer Page - Emergency Paid Leave](https://ibc.doi.gov/HRD/benefits/emergency-paid-leave)
* [CHCOC memo – Emergency Paid Leave](https://www.chcoc.gov/content/covid-19-emergency-paid-leave)
* [Emergency Paid Leave Effect on Retirement - Benefits Administration Letters 21-102](https://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/publications-forms/benefits-administration-letters/2021/21-102.pdf)
* [DOI Employees COVID-10 Information Portal](https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/doicov/SitePages/FAQ.aspx?CT=1621538829264&OR=OWA-NTB&CID=9888179e-a296-522d-9523-38f3067df361)
* [Office of Personnel Management American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 website](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/ARPA)